86R9039 SCL-D

By:  Watson S.B. No. 951

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the family first prevention services task force.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  (a) In this section, "task force" means the family first prevention services task force established under this section.

(b)  The family first prevention services task force is established for the purpose of assessing the readiness of this state in implementing Title VII, Div. E, Pub. L. No. 115-123 by 2021.

(c)  The task force is composed of at least 19 members appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services as follows:

(1)  the commissioner of family and protective services;

(2)  the assistant commissioner of child protective services;

(3)  the assistant commissioner of prevention and early intervention services;

(4)  the medical director of the department;

(5)  a representative from a single source continuum contractor;

(6)  a representative of a child-placing agency in this state with experience in managing a residential treatment center;

(7)  a representative of court-appointed volunteer advocates;

(8)  a judge of a court that hears suits affecting the parent-child relationship;

(9)  an attorney ad litem with experience in court-ordered representation of children and youth in the conservatorship of the department;

(10)  an advocate for foster children and youth who is not employed by or under contract with the department;

(11)  a representative of the legislature;

(12)  a representative of the Legislative Budget Board;

(13)  a representative of the office of the comptroller of public accounts;

(14)  three advocates who are not employed by or under contract with the department and who advocate for providing services to families at risk of entering the foster care system, including an advocate for the substance abuse treatment community, an advocate for the mental health treatment community, and an advocate with experience in providing services to pregnant and parenting youth;

(15)  an advocate with experience as a foster child;

(16)  an advocate with experience as a parent in the foster care system;

(17)  an advocate with experience as a kinship caregiver; and

(18)  any other member of the department's executive staff the commissioner considers necessary.

(d)  The commissioner of family and protective services serves as the presiding officer of the task force.

(e)  A vacancy for an appointed member of the task force is filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(f)  The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the presiding officer. The task force shall meet at other times as determined by the presiding officer.

(g)  The task force shall:

(1)  evaluate and make recommendations on matters related to the task force's purpose as described by Subsection (b) of this section, including:

(A)  the transformation of the placement of foster children and youth from residential treatment centers to qualified residential treatment providers and the process for certifying an unaccredited residential treatment center;

(B)  the total capacity of all foster care placements in this state;

(C)  the foster care prevention and early intervention strategies currently available in this state;

(D)  any issue that may arise in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship for a child or youth in the conservatorship of the department;

(E)  any issue relating to families entering the child protective services system; and

(F)  methods for using federal and state money to allow a greater number of children and youth to remain in their homes while addressing safety concerns for the children and youth; and

(2)  examine the costs to this state and the private sector and other issues related to the use of federal money allocated or transferred under Title VII, Div. E, Pub. L. No. 115-123.

(h)  The Department of Family and Protective Services shall provide reasonably necessary administrative and technical support to the task force.

(i)  The task force shall prepare a written report that includes:

(1)  a description of the activities of the task force;

(2)  the findings and recommendations of the task force; and

(3)  proposed legislation, recommendations, or information on any other relevant matter that the task force considers appropriate.

(j)  Not later than January 1, 2021, the task force shall submit the report described by Subsection (i) of this section to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and each member of the legislature.

(k)  The task force is abolished and this section expires June 1, 2021.

SECTION 2.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.